

Remarks

Claims 1-19 were pending in the application and were previously rejected. Claims 1, 10, and 16 are amended herein, and new claims 20-22 have been added. In view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks, reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Response to Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 9-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Spohn et al. (JP 411296333A). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, and further submit that it is mooted by the clarifying amendments that have been made to the claims.

On page 6 of the July 15, 2004 office action, the Examiner asserts that:

Spohn teaches a printer driver that incorporated within the host computer that allows users to route print information (i.e. parallel printing parameters) via dialog box (user interface) for parallel processing, also known as multicast and/or clusters. Once the users have selected and determined the appropriate options (i.e. parallel processing) via dialog box, the printer driver automatically divides print job into multiple small jobs and distributes to multiple printers connected in a network; therefore the users only require to transmit the print job once.

These teachings have been asserted with no reference to Spohn, and Applicants cannot locate them within the reference. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner identify the specific location(s) where Spohn teaches multicasting and only transmitting a print job once. It is noted that under the Examiner's description, were a multi-copy job divided "into multiple small jobs" each assigning one or more copies to each printer, each "small job" would have to contain a replication of the print job, and thus the print job necessarily would be transmitted more than once.

Applicant does agree with the Examiner insofar as Spohn teaches decomposing a print job into multiple print job segments and transmitting each segment to a corresponding printer (see, e.g., Spohn ¶ 28: "the print job decomposition section 120 will decompose the original print job into a print job segment to each of the selected printer ... a printer driver 52 transmits a print job segment to each selected printer through a spooler 55 and the network transport 150.") The meaning of this teaching is clear—given a print job ABC, Spohn can decompose that job into three segments A, B, and C, and transmit A to printer 1, B to printer 2, and C to printer 3. Spohn does not, however, teach multicasting ABC to printers 1, 2, and 3, and expecting each printer to sort out its assigned segment of the job.

Applicants have further clarified the claims in such a manner that they cannot be misconstrued to cover Spohn's teachings. Paraphrasing, Claim 1 recites allocating a subset of a number of copies to be created to each printer, formatting a *joint* print job containing instructions specific to each printer, and multicasting the joint print job to the printers. Clearly, Spohn does not teach creating and multicasting a joint print job, since Spohn explicitly teaches *decomposing a print job into segments*, and feeding the segments to separate printers.

Independent claims 10 and 16 have been amended in similar fashion to claim 1, and are patentable at least for the reasons indicated above for the allowability of claim 1. Likewise, the dependent claims are each patentable for the same reasons, in addition to the reasons stated in Applicants' previously filed response.

Claims 5-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spohn et al. and in view of Yokoyama (US Patent No. 6,166,826). Applicant continues to traverse this rejection for the reasons previously stated. In addition, Yokoyama does nothing to cure the deficiencies identified above in Spohn, i.e., the multiple claim limitations not taught by Spohn. Accordingly, the combination of Spohn and Yokoyama fails to create a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claim 1 and therefore necessarily for claims 5-8 as well.

Addition of New Claims

Applicant has added new claims 20-22 to claim additional aspects of the present invention. Claim 20 recites a subcombination of features found in claim 1, each of which is apparently not taught in the prior art.

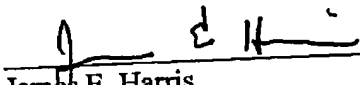
Claims 21 and 22 recite features found at the receiving end of a multicast joint print job, e.g., locating instructions specific to one of multiple printers and printing according to the located instructions. These features are supported by the original specification, e.g., at page 5, lines 1-5, which describes embedded information including a list of printer identifiers and the assigned number of documents for each printer, with each printer accessing the job and producing their assigned number of copies. The prior art fails to teach a receiving device with these features.

Conclusion

No new matter has been added by this amendment. Allowance of all claims is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

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Signature


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